

So, You're Having a Baby & You Work at LCC...

Congratulations! Here are some things you may want to know so that everything goes smoothly regarding your employment and benefits!

While Pregnant: You're entitled to certain workplace accommodations, even if you do not have a pregnancy-related medical condition. See the following link for more details about accommodations available to you:

- LNI's page: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/LeaveBenefits/PregnancyAccommodations/>
- Attorney General's page: <http://www.atg.wa.gov/pregnancy-accommodations>
- Additionally, if you receive guidance from your medical care provider that you need reasonable accommodation (adjustment of your duties, schedule or equipment to support you in continuing to do your job) for a pregnancy-related disability, contact your HR office, x2120. You may be eligible for a variety of accommodations to help you continue to work during your pregnancy, attend important medical appointments, etc.

Taking Time Off: You have rights and resources available to you to ensure that you have the opportunity to take time off to give birth and bond with your newborn. Below is some information related to leave.

- **FMLA:** As an LCC employee, you have access to Family Medical Leave through the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). FMLA grants you 12 weeks per year of job-protected leave without pay for a number of personal or family medical events, including giving birth to a child or adopting a child (please note that you can request an additional 6 weeks). The 12 weeks can be used consecutively, intermittently, or a combination of consecutive and intermittent. You can use your paid leave while you are taking time through FMLA. You need to be approved to use FMLA – contact HR early to ensure any time you take will be covered.
- **Paid Family Medical Leave:** Starting in 2020, Washington will be the fifth state in the nation to offer paid family and medical leave benefits to workers. The program will be funded by premiums paid by both employees and many employers, and will be administered by the Employment Security Department (ESD). This insurance program will allow workers to take necessary time off when they welcome a new child into their family and they may receive up to 90% of their wages (or up to \$1,000/week) paid to them through the Employment Security Department. As directed by the Legislature, benefits can be taken starting Jan. 1, 2020. The time off is consistent with what's offered through FMLA. However, the programs operate very differently. Contact HR for guidance. For more information, see Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) website: <https://paidleave.wa.gov/workers>.
- **Shared Leave for Parental Leave and Pregnancy-related Disability:** The Legislature passed HB 1434, which expands access to shared leave for state employees. The new law permits state employees to help fellow employees who are sick or temporarily disabled due to pregnancy disability or for parental leave by donating their own accrued leave. Agency heads may permit employees to receive shared leave for parental leave, or for sickness or temporary disability due to pregnancy disability. Employees are not required to deplete all of their annual and sick leave, and may maintain up to 40 hours of annual leave and 40 hours of sick leave in reserve. Shared leave requests are coordinated through HR.
 - "Parental leave" is defined as leave to bond and care for a newborn child after birth or to bond and care for a child after placement for adoption or foster care, for a period of up to 16 weeks after the birth or placement.
 - "Pregnancy disability" is defined as a pregnancy-related medical condition or miscarriage.

- **Long-Term Disability Insurance:** If you have a pregnancy-related disability that affects you for more than 90 days, and/or if you have previously chosen to participate in additional voluntary long-term disability insurance coverage with a shorter waiting period, you may be able to receive disability insurance compensation while you're of work. For more information, see HCA's website: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/public-employee-benefits/employees/long-term-disability-insurance#Eligibility-requirements>. LCC does not currently offer short-term disability insurance.

Leave without Pay: If you intend to take some leave without pay (LWOP), especially if you plan to use paid and unpaid leave intermittently to extend your time off, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Leave Accruals:** If you have more than 10 days of LWOP in a month, you do not earn your vacation or sick leave accruals for that month. If you're a Classified employee, your seniority date will be affected in months where you have more than 10 LWOP days.
- **Holidays:** In order to get paid for any holidays that occur while you're on leave, you need to be in pay status the whole work shift preceding the holiday. See WAC 357-31-010 for additional info.
- **Medical Insurance:** Although you remain benefit eligible while on FMLA or PFML, in order to ensure that your employee portion of the monthly premium is covered and you don't have to pay out of pocket, you may need to schedule paid leave during each month you are out. HR and Payroll can assist you with your planning.
- **PERS Retirement Service Credit:** In order to earn full monthly service credit for you PERS 2 or PERS 3 retirement, you need to have at least 90 hours in pay status during each month. If you have fewer than 90 but at least 70 hours in pay status, you will earn 0.5 monthly service credit. If you have fewer than 70 hours, you will earn 0.25 service credit. Those credits become very important later when you're looking at retirement! If you have more questions about retirement, contact the Dept. of Retirement Systems.

Returning to Work:

- **Easing in:** It may be possible for you to return to work part-time as you transition back into the workforce after taking leave; ask your employer if you're curious about this option.
- **Infant at Work Program:** Many state agencies now have a version of the Infant at Work (IAW) policy. Typically, IAW allows eligible, approved employees (mom and dads) to bring a single newborn into the office between the ages of 6 weeks to 6 months old or until the infant is crawling. Participants must be approved and must typically have a risk assessment of their workspace, must sign a liability waiver and must identify backup caregivers in their workplace. LCC does not currently have an IAW policy, but we are interested in gauging interest in this type of a program. Contact Human Resources to express interest. This is how more than one agency policy got started!
- **Benefit Coverage for Baby:** Whether or not you've returned to work, once your baby is born, if you intend to add them to your PEBB medical and dental insurance, keep an eye on the clock. You must submit your employee Enrollment/Change form to HR within 60 days from the date your baby was born. The effective date of their coverage is their DOB. For more information on enrolling your baby in your insurance, contact HR.

Contact your HR Team today!

LCC HR can assist you with any of the above topics and provide valuable guidance tailored to help you in your big life event. Contact your HR team at: 360-442-2120, hr@lowercolumbia.edu. HR is located in the Administration Building.